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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/684,729	10/06/2000	Thomas R. ST.Myer	TRW(RG)4902	1573
26294	7590	08/13/2004	EXAMINER	
TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL & TUMMINO L.L.P. 526 SUPERIOR AVENUE, SUITE 1111 CLEVEEVLAND, OH 44114			MCANULTY, TIMOTHY P	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3682	

DATE MAILED: 08/13/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/684,729

Applicant(s)

ST.MYER, THOMAS R.

Examiner

Timothy P McAnulty

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 May 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,9,13,15 and 27-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 27-38 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,9,13 and 15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

2. Claims 1,9,13, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Veneble et al. in view of Pfenninger, Jr., et al.

Veneble et al. discloses in figure 1, a steering assembly comprising an input shaft 14 inherently connected to a steering wheel (not referenced) and connected via a universal joint 134 to a lower steering column member 132; and a housing having a flange portion for connecting to the lower steering column member and a cavity wherein a first and second bearing 112 are located; said first and second bearing being separated by a smooth annular surface.

Veneble et al. does not disclose said first and second bearings comprising a gasket having a cylindrical inner surface and a ribbed outer surface. However, Pfenninger, Jr., et al. teaches in figure 1, an axially extending input shaft 16; a housing 17; a bearing interposed between the housing and the input shaft; at least one series of axially spaced annular ribs 23 on said housing wherein adjacent ribs are separated by an annular groove; and a gasket 22 encircling the bearing having ribs and on an outer surface of said gasket. Pfenninger, Jr., et al. also teaches in lines 31-40 of column 3 that ribs may be provided on one or both the housing and an inner ring 18, i.e. the inner ribs may not be provided on the inner ring and only provided on the housing; thus providing a cylindrical surface on an inner surface of said gasket. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the apparatus of Veneble et al. in view of the teachings of Pfenninger, Jr., et al. to include the old and well known bearing structure so taught to provide a cushion bearing mount between said housing and said input shaft.

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Veneble et al. also does not disclose said housing comprising at least two housing parts. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the housing comprising at least two parts, since it has been held that constructing a formerly integral structure in various elements involves only routine skill in the art. *Nerwin v. Erlichman*, 168 USPQ 177, 179 (PTO Bd. of INT. 1969).

The reference combination discloses the basic apparatus as previously cited but the limitation as to the annular ribs of said housing pressing into the gasket does not further limit the steering column as claimed. Even though product-by-process claims are limited and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. See MPEP §2113.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 27-38 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed 10 May 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The reference combination set forth above renders obvious the claimed invention.

Conclusion

5. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after

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the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Timothy P McAnulty whose telephone number is 703.308.8684. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (7:30-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bucci can be reached on 703.308.3668. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

tpm 


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